

Message Text

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JULY 11 1973.

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TAGS: PINT UK NI

SUBJECT: WHITE LAW STARTS TALKS WITH PARTY LEADERS ON ASSEMBLY

REF: BELFAST 109

1. ON JULY 10 1973 SECRETARY OF STATE WILLIAM WHITE LAW BEGAN THE IMPORTANT TASK OF CREATING SOME KIND OF EXECUTIVE FOR THE NEW NI ASSEMBLY. WHITE LAW DISCUSSED WITH LEADERS OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES THE DATE ON WHICH THE ASSEMBLY SHOULD FIRST MEET THE CONCEPT OF POWER SHARING AND THE CHOICE OF PRESIDING OFFICER. NOT EVEN THE FIRST POINT APPEARED TO BE SETTLED AS WHITE LAW HOPED THE 78 ASSEMBLY MEMBERS WOULD MEET THIS SUMMER HOWEVER PRESS REPORTS FOLLOWING A SECOND ROUND OF TALKS PESSIMISTICALLY PREDICTED DATES AS LATE AS NOVEMBER AS THE CRUCIAL QUESTIONS REMAINED UNANSWERED.

2. DAVID BLEAKLEY NI LABOUR PARTY WAS FAVORED FOR THE POST OF PRESIDING OFFICE IN THE ASSEMBLY BUT HE REPORTEDLY HAS NO ASPIRATIONS FOR THE JOB. AT THE MOMENT THE MOST LIKELY CANDIDATE APPEARS TO BE ROY BRADFORD UNIONIST AND FORMER MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT ALTHOUGH A LOT OF HORSE-TRADING WILL TAKE PLACE

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BEFORE AN AGREEABLE CANDIDATE IS CHOSEN. A BRIGHT SPOT EMERGING

OUT OF A DISMAL PICTURE IS THAT NEW IDEAS WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN INCONCEIVABLE A YEAR OR TWO AGO ARE BEING THROWN ABOUT AN EXAMPLE BEING DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN UNIONIST AND SDLP LEADERS ON SECURITY. ALL THIS IS PART OF WHAT BRADFORD APPROPRIATELY CALLS THE "NEW BALL GAME" THE CREATION OF UNEXPECTED ALLIANCES AND ATTEMPT TO BREAKDOWN BARRIERS.

3. ONE THINK SEEMS CERTAIN --- ANY HOPE THAT THE ASSEMBLY WOULD GET DOWN TO BUSINESS EXPEDITIOUSLY HAS VANISHED. CHOOSING A CHAIRMAN DECIDING ON PROCEDURE POWER SHARING AND THE MYRIAD OF MINOR DETAILS WILL IN ALL PROBABILITY DELAY THE FIRST ASSEMBLY MEETING UNTIL AUTUMN.
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